

CANADIAN EVANGELICAL BAPTISTS: BREAKING DOWN THE WALLS

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The following is by Wilson Ewin (Quebec Baptist Missions, 9 Cochrane Road, Compton, Quebec, Canada J0B 1L0). The Ewins have been faithfully proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Roman Catholic Quebec for four decades, often under very difficult circumstances. He has been jailed, stoned, manhandled and threatened with death. When Ewin arrived in Quebec in the early 1950s, the Bible was a forbidden book. In spite of these trials, the Ewins continued to preach the Gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ, and several churches have been established. Now to the report on the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptists of Canada --

Promise Keepers, the most radical thrust of ecumenism ever to be put in motion, has now been granted acceptance by leaders of Canada's largest body of evangelical Baptists. This was first revealed through an article written by one of its pastors and published in the July-August issue of "The Fellowship Baptist." Entitling his report, "The Swelling Tide," Dr. W.E. Coleman, Senior Pastor of Faith Baptist Church, St. Thomas, Ontario, described his own reaction and that of other Fellowship pastors to the Promise Keepers movement.

The story began in April 1995 when "we took 30 of our men" to a conference. Then came "this past February, when 18 of the local men in ministry joined a bus tour sponsored by our church to the Promise Keepers clergy Conference in Atlanta..." Finally, "This May 1996, we again took over 100 men to the conference at the Pontiac Silverdome."

Dr. Coleman wrote: "Never in our wildest dreams could we anticipate what God did in our hearts in the midst of 43,000 other pastors, missionaries and Christian leaders..." He concluded: "... we are praising God for this move of His Spirit and the incredible blessing it has been in our church and community." The enthusiasm for Promise Keepers became apparent when one of its officials, Tony Evans actually appeared as speaker at the November 1996 Convention of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada.

The shocking story of Promise Keepers has been carried in countless fundamentalist publications, articles and reports. These warning messages show the movement to be working aggressively for the global union of Roman Catholics, Orthodox, evangelicals, liberals, charismatics, Mormons and Pentecostals. One such report is offered by Dr. Ralph Colas, Executive Secretary of the American Council of Christian Churches, P.O. Box 19, Wallingford, PA., U.S.A. 19086-0019. He attended the February 1996 Clergy Conference as a reporter for the ACCC.

THE ISSUE OF ROMANISM

The enthusiastic response from the FEBC pastors attending the above 1996 Clergy Conference was directed to such speakers as Dr. Jesse Miranda. He was one of those who signed the March 1994 joint declaration "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium." AN EARLY TREND OF TOLERANCE, COMPROMISE AND NEUTRALITY TOWARDS ROMAN CATHOLICISM WAS ALREADY PRONOUNCED IN THE FEBC DURING THE 1960'S.

Pope John XXIII had opened the Church's Ecumenical Council with an address in St. Peter's Basilica on October 11, 1962. Men of God began to observe the coming ecumenical storm and one among several groups monitoring the Vatican Council Sessions was the Canadian Protestant League. It came into service through the efforts of Dr. T.T. Shields of Toronto's Jarvis Street Baptist Church. He was aptly dubbed "the Spurgeon of Canada." Historian George W. Dollar wrote this of the League's birth:

"Few men living in Shield's day knew as much about the doctrines and practices of Romanism as he did. No one in Canada raised such an effective voice against the domination of Rome in the arena of politics He resented and exposed its tyranny in no uncertain language. Reading the Gospel Witness for this period would be an education in all phases of the history of that Church. Shields saw the growing power of Catholic Quebec as a huge cloud of darkness over the Canadian scene. He initiated the Canadian Protestant League to rally the people and alert them to the dangers. Even the Prime Minister did not escape his charges of cowardice, and W. L. Mackenzie King said openly that he had contempt for Shields" (Dollar, A History of Fundamentalism in America, p. 111).

It was vitally important for believers to be made aware of the Vatican's subtle device called ecumenism. This had been launched to unite all religions of the globe under the pope of Rome. Keenly aware of this ominous threat to God's people, those members of the Protestant League who were named delegates for the [Baptist] Fellowship's Annual Convention felt obliged to act.

THE REJECTION OF A VITAL RESOLUTION

They prepared a comprehensive resolution for the entire body of delegates to consider. The document proposed that the FEBC affirm a conviction that Roman Catholicism is a totally apostate religion, that the FEBC resolve to oppose and resist the Vatican's ecumenical program and that local churches be exhorted to carry the gospel around the world for the salvation of Roman Catholics.

Baptist leaders such as Dr. J.F. Holliday and the Wellington brothers, Stanley and Wilfrid, spoke for the proposed resolution. But tragically, the Fellowship Convention declined to accept the articles. No opportunity was given to revise or modify the proposed resolution; it was simply dropped. Amazingly, the vote count showed an overwhelming majority of the delegates to be opposed. The few in favor were stunned, including this writer. He left the meeting and

determined to seek the fellowship of others who still chose to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3) and to resist the Church of Rome and other forms of apostasy.

Those observers acquainted with the history of neo-evangelicalism and its attitude of neutrality, compromise and withdrawal from the struggle against apostasy, realized the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptists was already seriously affected. Perhaps it was too late for the pastors to study the message recorded in William E. Ashbrook's classic documentary entitled "Evangelicalism: The New Neutralism." The author died in 1977 but his son continued the work.

John Ashbrook's sequel is entitled "New Neutralism II." The book majors on the topic of neo-evangelicalism and Roman Catholicism and concludes with these words:

"From the hilltop of history it is easy to see that new evangelicalism ... has traced a great circle back to the fellowship of apostasy. The heroes of the 1930's led their followers to separate from apostasy. New evangelicalism has led back into the apostasy their forefathers left. Worse still, the reformation has been vitiated and the Pope is ready to welcome the wanderers home" (Ashbrook, New Neutralism II: Exposing the Gray of Compromise, Here I Stand Books, 8686 Hilltop Drive, Mentor, OH 44060).

TRUE BELIEVERS LEFT TO DRIFT

Thirty years passed following the Fellowship's 1963 rejection of the proposed resolution on Romanism. The grip of neo-evangelicalism upon the leadership has intensified to a point of crisis. A halt has now occurred in the former resistance to Pentecostal-Charismatism and the people are left to drift before its powerful waves.

Recognized as the "Prince of Expositors," G. Campbell Morgan moved to the United States in the year 1900. He watched pentecostalism as it developed from infancy at the Azusa Street Mission in San Francisco. Professor at the Los Angeles Bible Institute, Gordon College and the author of 60 books, Morgan classified Pentecostalism as "the last vomit of Satan" before his death in 1945.

A strong wave of Pentecostalism erupted at Toronto Airport's Vineyard Church in 1994. Known as the "Toronto Blessing" it was billed in Toronto Life magazine as the top tourist attraction for 1994. Articles appeared in the Fellowship Baptist magazine, and the February 1995 issue contained one entitled "The Toronto Airport Vineyard: Grapes of wrath or Blessing?" The author is Pastor Justin Dennison of the Bramalea Baptist Church, Bramalea, Ontario. He said:

"The Spirit of God is at work. It would be churlish and indeed judgemental of anyone to say anything different... The unusual phenomena (laughing, crying, shaking etc.) caused as much puzzlement and questioning to them back then (during historical revivals) as it does to us today..."

In respect and concern for those Fellowship churches and people who wish to remain firm against the ecumenical tide of Pentecostalism, this writer assembled packages of documents. Each contained ten reports and articles from Charisma, Christian Week, MacLeans magazines besides those from Pentecostal leaders. Only one reply came and it was hostile.

Promise Keepers has now eclipsed and moved beyond the Toronto Blessing. They are not opponents, for both come from the same Pentecostal source as revealed in Albert Dager's Media Spotlight. It states:

"It's no secret that Vineyard adherents comprise the top leadership of Promise Keepers. This includes founder Bill McCartney, and president Randy Phillips, as well as their pastor, James Ryle, who helped fund and continues to help guide Promise Keepers. Ryle is pastor of the Boulder Valley, Colorado, Vineyard, and is a Vineyard 'Prophet.' Considering the Vineyard tactic of infiltration as a means to implant its psychic -- and psychologically -- based philosophy into their churches, the possibility exists that the Vineyard may see more value in Promise Keepers than in the 'holy laughter' phenomenon [of the Toronto Blessing]."

"Let the Walls Come Down," Steve Green sang repeatedly at the Promise Keepers conference. Speaker Randy Phillips said, "Men we are coming together in 22 stadiums in 1996 to Break Down the Walls." Then PK's founder Bill McCartney addressed the 40,000 ministers at the 1996 Atlanta Clergy Conference and said the following:

"No such meeting was held in the past 400 years, and it is exciting to see the denominational barriers come down as we have Protestants and Roman Catholics here together. The purpose of this meeting is to have the unity of the Church."

Unity! The Christian News in its October 14, 1996 article on Promise Keepers contained the following solemn observation:

"No doubt about it, this is one-church dictatorship revisited, or perhaps we should say, 'one-para-church,- ecumenical-organization dictatorship... Let the PK men scheme and scream for the walls of separation to come down between true and false churches, and for the One World Church to be built, if that is what they wish."

How true, for the Saviour did say, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind..." (Matt. 15:14).